



**ROSA 4 ROCKLAND INC.
RAMAPO ORGANIZED FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND A SAFE AQUIFER**
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August 19, 2019

Planning Board Town of Ramapo
237 Route 59
Suffern, NY 10901

RE: Public Hearing of August 19, 2019 for unspecified action under SEQRA that purportedly will result in a recommendation for 1) changes to the Town Comprehensive Plan, 2) changes to Town zoning code, and 3) change in zoning in the Northeast area of unincorporated Ramapo

Dear Town Board:

We are writing on behalf of ROSA 4 Rockland and its supporters in reaction to a document entitled:

DRAFT GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DGEIS)
DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT for the Project titled: Town of Ramapo
Comprehensive Plan Amendment for the Northeast Ramapo Development
Plan and Comprehensive Plan Update of Town-wide Existing Conditions Code
Amendments for Northeast Ramapo

It is utterly depressing that the Town Board has allowed this bastardized process of updating its comprehensive plan get this far after spending so much money on professionals and accomplishing next to nothing.

The Town does not serve either the residents of Ramapo who want zoning protected, nor residents of Ramapo looking affordable housing options, nor the developers of Ramapo chomping at the bit for a rezoning gift in their bank account by avoiding the hard but necessary work of updating the comprehensive plan comprehensively.

There is no question that one of the major objectives of any serious update to the comprehensive plan must be to 1) figure out what the comprehensive plan recommended, 2) analyze what was or wasn't done, 3) obtain feedback from residents on what did or did not work and then, and only then, 4) establish new objectives for the next update to the comprehensive plan.

The Town Board appears to be ignoring a rare opportunity to re-establish trust in the Town of Ramapo between the residents and the Town Board and to work to end divisiveness between different communities with differing values, by focusing on good planning processing, good planning principles and open communications with sufficient notice throughout the process.

ROSA OFFERS PROFESSIONAL PLANNING COMMENTS TO TOWN BOARD

ROSA 4 Rockland established itself from the beginning on the principles that the residents of Ramapo and Rockland County need to be represented by legal, environmental and planning experts in public hearings. In keeping with this mission, ROSA 4 Rockland Inc. has engaged professional planning experts at Nelson, Pope and Voorhis LLC ("NPV") to review the posted materials for tonight's public hearing and make comments. The letter written by NPV with today's date is hereby offered by and adopted by ROSA 4 Rockland. ROSA invites any other speakers tonight to adopt these comments.

ROSA OBJECTS TO THE SCHEDULING OF THIS MEETING AND REQUESTS AN ADJOURNMENT

In January the Town Board promised that its efforts would continue in February and that Monsey and Hillcrest would be incorporated into the comprehensive planning efforts by March.

On February 28, 2019 the Town Board sent out an unsigned error ridden Full Environmental Impact Form purportedly related to this action with a Notice of Intent to be Lead Agency. This was signed over a month later and has never been subject to a public hearing. The action is improper and therefore ROSA is not commenting on the problematic FEAF.

We urge the Town of Ramapo Board to initiate a true comprehensive planning process following New York Department of State Recommendation and good planning guidelines, and of course follow SEQRA when it comes time to review the draft plans, and give up on trying to bastardize the process in an effort to stymie public comment and opinion. ROSA is willing to help the Town get back on track in a timely fashion.

To announce public hearings in the dead of summer for dates in the dead of summer is an insult to every resident of Ramapo. Not only does it detract from interested people participating in the meeting but it also serves to deny groups like ROSA from being able to effectively engage professional reviewers and allowing them adequate time for their review.

→ ROSA asks this board to adjourn the public hearing to allow for additional comments through mid September.

ROSA SUBMITS PETITION

ROSA 4 Rockland collected over 570 signatures from Ramapo residents earlier this year on a petition for consideration by the Town Board with respect to its Northeast Strategic Planning and updates to the Town Comprehensive Plan. We submit this petition to the Town Board tonight. ROSA will submit the signature pages at a future time in order to redact personal email addresses. When doing so, ROSA will not edit or withhold the content of the comments but makes this statement for the record that these are individual comments and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of ROSA 4 Rockland Inc or its mission; only the wording of the petition itself originated with ROSA. This should be incorporated into any planning done in relation to the Scoping Document being developed tonight. The wording of the Petition follows.

ROSA PETITION – “CALL FOR REASON FOR STRATEGIC & COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING IN RAMAPO”

TO: Town Board of the Town of Ramapo and any committees formed to advise on strategic or comprehensive planning of some or all of the Town of Ramapo

FROM: ROSA 4 Rockland and identified Petitioners

Like ROSA 4 Rockland, I am not anti-development but am for thorough planning and the preservation of the environment and community character of the Town of Ramapo. I agree with the following ROSA 4 Rockland recommendations related to comprehensive planning updates for the various areas throughout Ramapo designed to protect the health and safety of the residents of Ramapo:

1. The Comprehensive Plan should be comprehensive and look at Town needs, issues and concerns as a whole as the term “comprehensive” means before the public review and planner recommendation take place on a piecemeal basis.
2. The Town should start by providing accurate map(s) at the beginning of the planning process revealing all environmental constraints, vacant lands, and open space for public and planner consideration in future comprehensive planning.
3. All local wetlands including riparian buffers should be protected by conservation easement buffers similar to state wetlands. With the increased pressure of development in wetland laden vacant land, it is time for Ramapo to consider a new wetland protection law.
4. No increase in density and a decrease in density should be considered within the sole source aquifer area and 200' of FEMA floodplains.
5. No increase in density and a decrease in density should be considered within 500' of the 24" high-pressure gas pipelines in Ramapo.
6. In lower density residential areas, new bulk table standards should be developed for clustered multi-family development to enable new housing styles that are environmentally appropriate.
7. As per the recommendation of the current Comprehensive Plan the “Preservation of Existing Residential Zoning Patterns” should remain a goal of any update to the Comprehensive Plan.
8. Before any change in zoning patterns is considered the Town should provide a report on what development can still take place under existing zoning to meet housing demands.
9. I am generally opposed to any increase in housing density. Rezoning requests should be discouraged generally and any rezoning request in low density residential areas to higher density on lands should absolutely require specific and significant public benefits in favor of the immediate surrounding area that will be affected.
10. With respect to any requested changes in zoning density, As per the recommendations of the current Comprehensive Plan any consideration of a change in

zoning in low density residential neighbors be limited to one step down and not more; for e.g. R-40 density should be restricted to R-25 (see D-4)

THE TOWN SHOULD BE HIRING INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS TO ASSIST IN ITS ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

In order to gain trust and respect from the residents at large, ROSA asks the Town to please consider hiring respected environmental professionals to take inventory of Town environmental resources. ROSA would like to be able to participate in making recommendations toward this goal.

And with respect to the emergency responders in the fire departments and in the ambulance corps, we ask the Town to provide a budget for those volunteer service organizations to tap into to support their own efforts to participate in future planning processes.

Sincerely yours,



Deborah Munitz
Board Member
ROSA 4 Rockland, Inc.

